

## **Methamphetamine & Amphetamines**

(Amphetamine, dextroamphetamine, methamphetamine, and their various salts are collectively referred to as amphetamines. In fact, their chemical properties and actions are so similar that even experienced users have difficulty knowing which drug they have taken. Methamphetamine is the most commonly abused.)

Street terms for methamphetamine: Meth, poor man's cocaine, crystal meth, ice, glass, speed<sup>1</sup>

What Does Methamphetamine Look Like?

- Typically meth is a white, odorless powder that easily dissolves in water.
- Another form of meth, in clear chunky crystals, called crystal meth, or ice.
- Meth can also be in the form of small, brightly colored tablets. The pills are often called by their Thai name, yaba.

What are the methods of usage?

- Injecting
- Snorting
- Smoking
- Oral ingestion<sup>2</sup>

Who uses methamphetamine and amphetamines?

- During 2000, 4% of the U.S. population reported trying methamphetamine at least once in their lifetime.<sup>3</sup>
- Abuse is concentrated in the western, southwestern, and midwestern United States.

How do methamphetamine and amphetamines get to the United States?

- Clandestine laboratories in California and Mexico are the primary sources of supply for methamphetamine available in the United States.
- Domestic labs that produce methamphetamine are dependent on supplies of the precursor chemical pseudoephedrine, which is sometimes diverted from legitimate sources. It is smuggled from Canada, and to a lesser extent from Mexico.
- Domestic independent laboratory operators, mostly in the western, southwestern, and midwestern United States, also produce and distribute methamphetamine but on a smaller scale.
- Yaba (meth in tablet form) is most often produced in Southeast Asia and sent by mail or courier to the United States.<sup>4</sup>

How much do methamphetamine and amphetamines cost?

- Prices for methamphetamine vary throughout different regions of the United States.

- At the distribution level, prices range from \$3,500 per pound in parts of California and Texas to \$21,000 per pound in southeastern and northeastern regions of the country. Retail prices range from \$400 to \$3,000 per ounce.<sup>5</sup>

What are some consequences of methamphetamine and amphetamine use?

- Effects of usage include addiction, psychotic behavior, and brain damage.<sup>6</sup>
- Withdrawal symptoms include depression, anxiety, fatigue, paranoia, aggression, and intense cravings.<sup>7</sup>
- Chronic use can cause violent behavior, anxiety, confusion, insomnia, auditory hallucinations, mood disturbances, delusions, and paranoia.<sup>8</sup>
- Damage to the brain cause by meth usage is similar to Alzheimer's disease, stroke, and epilepsy.<sup>9</sup>

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1 Office of National Drug Control Policy, Street Terms: Drugs and the Drug Trade.

2 Drug Enforcement Administration, The Forms Of Methamphetamine, April 2002

3 Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Summary of Findings from the 2000 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, September 2001.

4 Drug Enforcement Administration, Drug Trafficking in the United States, September 2001.

5 Ibid.

6 Office of National Drug Control Policy, Drug Facts: Methamphetamine, May, 2002.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 National Institute on Drug Abuse, Methamphetamine: Abuse and Addiction, April, 1998. What are the Effects of Methamphetamine Abuse?